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EXHIBIT 17
DATE 02/15/13
HB 2

February 15, 2013

Joint Appropriations/Finance General Government Subcommittee
Montana State Legislature
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Legislators:

The Missoula Economic Partnership is a private sector led economic development organization dedicated to growing a diversified vibrant regional economy in Western Montana. The Missoula Economic Partnership strongly supports the funding request for the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. The Department and the local Job Service Office are vital partners in our local economic development efforts.

Missoula Job Service works hand in hand with Missoula Economic Partnership in **business recruitment**. They routinely demonstrate the availability of our quality labor force, efficiently and quickly connecting employers to employees.

In Missoula, we have two recent illustrations of this. Norweld, a Canadian manufacturing company seeking to expand operations to Missoula, wondered if we had sufficient plumbers and pipefitters to meet their needs. In response to this perceived gap, MJS Director, Wolf Ametsbichler, announced the potential employment through our local paper, and within two weeks we were able to present the company with 174 quality applicants to meet their needs. The company had anticipated a response of 50 maximum. The quality of our applicant pool was bested only by Job Service's ability to move quickly and professionally to meet and exceed this private sector need. The company noticed and knew they would be able to rely on Missoula Job Service to help them fill the positions when they became available.

Job Service again demonstrated its ability to move at the speed of business with ALCOM. This Maine-based aluminum trailer manufacturer, is now producing in Missoula due in no small part to the ability of Missoula Job Service to help them ramp up with a few dozen employees to start and up to 200 anticipated over the next two years. MJS was in continual communication with MEP and ALCOM regarding staffing needs, helped the employer to craft appropriate job descriptions and even opened up their facilities to ALCOM for interviewing.

MJS also works with us to answer myriad inquiries from incoming prospects regarding wages, labor pool, etc... Their prompt, thorough replies give us a competitive advantage in business attraction.

-Missoula Job Service also works hand in hand with us in our **Business Retention and Expansion efforts (BRE)**.



As an example, one of our best BRE tools is the Incumbent Worker Training program. Each year IWT funds are utilized by dozens of Missoula companies, allowing their employees to acquire much needed training and add new skills thereby making their companies stronger and more competitive nationally. Notable companies such as Submittable, a nationally recognized technology startup, utilized IWT funding to attend Y Combinator boot camp in 2012. As a result, this company fine-tuned its product and has received over a million dollars of angel money to date. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324039504578260421145373916.html>

(Note, the IWT program funding for FY 2013 has just been completely committed. No more grant \$ available until FY 2014.)

Another important BRE tool is the On the Job Training program. OJT contracts provide excellent opportunities for companies small and large to make hires vital to their long term success *today*. Were it not for OJT these companies may have to delay these hires by months or years. Locally, one of our star startups, Blue Marble Bio, has made use of these funds as have many others.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments. The Department of Labor and Industry, and local Job Service Centers, are excellent partners in working to build and develop a vibrant private sector jobs for today and the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Grunke", written over a horizontal line.

James W. Grunke
President and CEO